

# **United States District Court**

For the Northern District of California

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

11 | THERESA LUCARELLI, No. C-05-1590 MMC

12 || v.

PAUL DILLARD, LETHEL POLK, and DOES  
ONE THROUGH TEN, inclusive,

No. C-05-1590 MMC

**ORDER GRANTING IN PART AND  
DENYING IN PART DEFENDANTS'  
MOTION TO DISMISS COMPLAINT;  
DENYING AS MOOT REQUEST FOR  
STAY; VACATING HEARING**

## Defendants

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17 Before the Court is the motion, filed August 9, 2005 by defendants Paul Dillard  
18 ("Dillard") and Lethel Polk ("Polk"), to dismiss plaintiff Theresa Lucarelli's complaint  
19 pursuant to Rule 12(b)(6) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Plaintiff has filed  
20 opposition, to which defendants have replied. Having read and considered the papers filed  
21 in support of and in opposition to the motion, the Court deems the matter appropriate for  
22 decision on the papers, VACATES the hearing scheduled for October 7, 2005, and rules as  
23 follows:

24       1. Defendants' request for a stay until the Court has considered defendants' motion  
25 to disqualify plaintiff's counsel is hereby DENIED as moot, as the Court, by separate order,  
26 has denied defendants' motion to disqualify.

27       2. Defendants are not entitled to dismissal of the First and Second Causes of  
28 Action, each alleging a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against Dillard and Polk, on the

1 ground such claims are barred by the statute of limitations. Because California has  
 2 “multiple statutes of limitations for personal injury actions,” the applicable statute of  
 3 limitations for purposes of § 1983 is the “residual statute for personal injury actions.” See  
 4 Owens v. Okure, 488 U.S. 235, 249-50 and n. 8 (1989). The “residual statute” is § 335.1 of  
 5 the California Code of Civil Procedure, which provides a two-year statute of limitations for a  
 6 claim for “assault, battery, or injury to, or for the death of, an individual caused by the  
 7 wrongful act or neglect of another.” See McDougal v. County of Imperial, 942 F. 2d 668,  
 8 672 (9th Cir. 1991) (holding “residual statute for personal injury actions” is statute including  
 9 “catchall” provision, i.e., provision covering injury “caused by the wrongful act or neglect of  
 10 another”). Because the earliest act on which plaintiff bases her claims occurred less than  
 11 two years before she filed her complaint, (see Compl. ¶ 9), plaintiff’s First and Second  
 12 Causes of Action are timely.

13       3. With respect to plaintiff’s Third Cause of Action, alleging a § 1983 claim against  
 14 “supervisory doe defendants” for failure to properly train Dillard, defendants argue such  
 15 claim should be dismissed as against them because they are not named therein. Given  
 16 that the Third Cause of Action is not alleged as against the moving defendants, however,  
 17 there is nothing for the Court to dismiss as against the moving defendants.<sup>1</sup>

18       4. Plaintiff’s Seventh Cause of Action, alleging a violation of the California  
 19 Whistleblower Protection Act (“CWPA”), Cal. Gov’t Code §§ 8547-8547.12, is subject to  
 20 dismissal, without prejudice, because plaintiff has not alleged that she filed a complaint with  
 21 the State Personnel Board and that such entity has issued or failed to issue findings in  
 22 connection therewith. See Cal. Gov’t Code § 8547.8(c) (setting forth prerequisites to filing  
 23 claim for damages under CWPA). In light of plaintiff’s representation, in her opposition, that  
 24 she has not exhausted her administrative remedies, (see Pl.’s Opp., filed September 16,  
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26           <sup>1</sup>If, in the future, plaintiff were to seek leave to amend to substitute one or both of  
 27 such defendants for a “doe” defendant, any substantive or procedural deficiencies could be  
 28 addressed at that time. See, e.g., Merritt v. County of Los Angeles, 875 F. 2d 765, 768-69  
 (9th Cir. 1989) (directing district court to consider whether plaintiff’s motion to amend to  
 substitute name of actual defendant for “doe” in § 1983 claim was proper under California  
 relation-back law).

1 2005, at 5:18-19), leave to amend to allege exhaustion would, at the present time, be  
 2 futile.<sup>2</sup>

3       5. The parties agree that each remaining state law claim is subject to the  
 4 presentation requirement set forth in the California Tort Claims Act. See Cal. Gov't Code  
 5 § 910(e). Where a plaintiff has not satisfied the presentation requirement before  
 6 commencing suit, the plaintiff's state law claims are subject to dismissal. See  
 7 Karim-Panahi v. Los Angeles Police Dep't, 839 F. 2d 621, 627 (9th Cir. 1988). Further,  
 8 where a plaintiff has presented a claim, "the factual circumstances set forth in the written  
 9 claim must correspond with the facts alleged in the complaint," and, thus, a complaint  
 10 based on facts not set forth within the written claim is subject to dismissal. See Fall River  
 11 Joint Unified Sch. Dist. v. Superior Court, 206 Cal. App. 3d 431, 434 (1988).

12           a. Plaintiff's tort claim makes no reference to any conduct by Polk. (See  
 13 Lamerdin Decl., filed August 9, 2005, Ex. A).<sup>3</sup> Consequently, plaintiff has not complied with  
 14 the presentation requirement with respect to any claim against Polk, and such claims are  
 15 subject to dismissal. See Karim-Panahi, 839 F. 2d at 627.

16           b. Plaintiff's tort claim alleges Dillard "has routinely and repeatedly harassed  
 17 [plaintiff] verbally and, on one occasion, physically, and has further obstructed her career  
 18 opportunities," and that Dillard engaged in such conduct for the "sole reason [ ] that  
 19 [plaintiff] asserted her legal right to report his unlawful conduct." (See Lamerdin Decl. Ex. A  
 20 ¶ 18.) Plaintiff further represented that such conduct had not occurred "more than six  
 21 months" earlier than March 7, 2005. (See id. ¶¶ 13, 22.) In her complaint, by contrast,  
 22 plaintiff seeks relief based on an allegation that Dillard engaged in tortious conduct on April  
 23 30, 2003 and May 1, 2003. (See Compl. ¶ 9-22.) Because plaintiff chose to limit her tort

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 25           <sup>2</sup>Further, plaintiff's request for leave to amend to allege a claim for injunctive relief  
 26 under the CWPA will be denied, because the only relief available under the statute is  
 damages. See Cal. Gov't Code § 8547.8(c) (providing for "action for damages").

27           <sup>3</sup>The Court takes judicial notice of plaintiff's claim, dated March 7, 2005 and received  
 28 March 8, 2005 by the California Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board.  
See Oregon Ass'n of Homes for the Aging, Inc. v. Oregon, 5 F. 3d 1239, 1243 n.2 (9th Cir.  
 1993) (holding district court may take judicial notice of records of administrative body).

1 claim to conduct occurring no earlier than six months before March 7, 2005, she has failed  
2 to present any claim against Dillard based on conduct occurring in 2003, and such claims  
3 are subject to dismissal. See Fall River Joint Unified Sch. Dist., 206 Cal. App. 3d at 434.  
4 Plaintiff's complaint, however, can be liberally construed as alleging acts of harassment,  
5 retaliation, and defamation by Dillard occurring within six months of March 7, 2005, (see  
6 Compl. ¶¶ 23-27), and, as a consequence, Dillard is not entitled to dismissal of the state  
7 law claims against him in their entirety, although such claims will be limited in scope to  
8 conduct occurring within six months of March 7, 2005.

9 **CONCLUSION**

10 For the reasons stated, defendants' request for a stay is hereby DENIED as moot,  
11 and defendants' motion to dismiss plaintiff's complaint is hereby GRANTED in part and  
12 DENIED in part, as follows:

- 13 1. The Seventh Cause of Action is dismissed in its entirety, without prejudice.
- 14 2. The Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth  
15 Causes of Action are dismissed, as against Polk, without prejudice.
- 16 3. The Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth  
17 Causes of Action are dismissed, as against Dillard, to the extent such claims are based on  
18 conduct occurring more than six months before March 7, 2005.
- 19 4. In all other respects, the motion is denied.

20 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

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22 Dated: September 28, 2005

  
MAXINE M. CHESNEY  
United States District Judge

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